



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. VIII. — *The Rebellion Record*. Edited by FRANK MOORE.
New York: G. P. Putnam. 1860–64. Six volumes. 8vo.

It has been said that the American people are less apt than others to profit by experience, because the bustle of their lives keeps breaking the thread of that attention which is the material of memory, till no one has patience or leisure to spin from it a continuous thread of thought. We suspect that this is not more true of us than of other nations, — than it is of all people who read newspapers. Great events are perhaps not more common than they used to be, but a vastly greater number of trivial incidents are now recorded, and this dust of time gets in our eyes. The telegraph strips history of everything down to the bare fact, but it does not observe the true proportions of things, and we must make an effort to recover them. In brevity and cynicism it is a mechanical Tacitus, giving no less space to the movements of Sala than of Sherman, as impartial a leveler as death. It announces with equal *sangfroid* the surrender of Kirby Smith and the capture of a fresh Rebel Governor, reducing us to the stature at which posterity shall reckon us. Eminent contemporaneity may see here how much space will be allotted to it in the historical compends and biographical dictionaries of the next generation. In artless irony the telegraph is unequalled among the satirists of this generation. But this short-hand diarist confounds all distinctions of great and little, and roils the memory with minute particles of what is oddly enough called intelligence. We read in successive paragraphs the appointment of a Provisional Governor of North Carolina, whose fitness or want of it may be the turning-point of our future history, and the nomination of a minister, who will at most only bewilder some foreign court with a more desperately helpless French than his predecessor. The conspiracy trial at Washington, whose result will have absolutely no effect on the real affairs of the nation, occupies for the moment more of the public mind and thought than the question of reconstruction, which involves the life or death of the very principle we have been fighting for these four years.

Undoubtedly the event of the day, whatever it may be, is apt

to become unduly prominent, and to thrust itself obscuringly between us and the perhaps more important event of yesterday, where the public appetite demands fresh gossip rather than real news, and the press accordingly keeps its spies everywhere on the lookout for trifles that become important by being later than the last. And yet this minuteness of triviality has its value also. Our sensitive sheet gives us every morning the photograph of yesterday, and enables us to detect and to study at leisure that fleeting expression of the time which betrays its character, and which might altogether escape us in the idealized historical portrait. We cannot estimate the value of the *items* in our daily newspaper, because the world to which they relate is too familiar and prosaic; but a hundred years hence some Thackeray will find them full of picturesque life and spirit. The "Chronicle" of the Annual Register makes the England of the last century more vividly real to us than any history. The jests which Pompeian idlers scribbled on the walls, while Vesuvius was brooding its fiery conspiracy under their feet, bring the scene nearer home to us than the letter of Pliny, and deepen the tragedy by their trifling contrast, like the grave-diggers' unseemly gabble in Hamlet. Perhaps our judgment of history is made sounder, and our view of it more lifelike, when we are so constantly reminded how the little things of life assert their place alongside the great ones, and how healthy the constitution of the race is, how sound its digestion, how gay its humor, that can take the world so easily while our continent is racked with fever and struggling for life against the doctors.

"Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew, the dog must have his day."

It is always pleasant to meet Dame Clio over the tea-table, as it were, where she is often more entertaining, if not more instructive, than when she puts on the loftier port and more ceremonious habit of a Muse. These inadvertences of history are pleasing. We are no longer foreigners in any age of the world, but feel that in a few days we could have accommodated ourselves there, and that, wherever men are, we are not far from home. The more we can individualize and personify, the more lively our sympathy. Man interests us scientifically, but men claim us through all that we have made a part of our

nature by education and custom. We would give more to know what Xenophon's soldiers gossiped about round their camp-fires, than for all the particulars of their retreat. Sparta becomes human to us when we think of Agesilaus on his hobby-horse. Finding that those heroic figures romped with their children, we begin for the first time to suspect that they ever really existed as much as Robinson Crusoe. Without these personal traits, antiquity seems as unreal to us as Sir Thomas More's Utopia. It is, indeed, surprising how little of real life what is reckoned solid literature has preserved to us, voluminous as it is. Where does chivalry at last become something more than a mere procession of plumes and armor, to be lamented by Burke, except in some of the less ambitious verses of the Trouvères, where we hear the canakin clink too emphatically, perhaps, but which at least paint living men and possible manners? Tennyson's knights are cloudy, gigantic, of no age or country, like the heroes of Ossian. They are creatures without stomachs. Homer is more condescending, and though we might not be able to draw the bow of Ulysses, we feel quite at home with him and Eumæus over their roast pork.

We cannot deny that the poetical view of any period is higher, and in the deepest sense truer, than all others; but we are thankful also for the penny-a-liner, whether ancient or modern, who reflects the whims and humors, the enthusiasms and weaknesses, of the public in unguarded moments. Is it so certain, after all, that we should not be interesting ourselves in other quite as nugatory matters if these were denied us? In one respect, and no unimportant one, the instantaneous dispersion of news and the universal interest in it have affected the national thought and character. The whole people have acquired a certain metropolitan temper; they feel everything at once and in common; a single pulse sends anger, grief, or triumph through the whole country; one man sitting at the keyboard of the telegraph in Washington sets the chords vibrating to the same tune from sea to sea; and this simultaneousness, this unanimity, deepens national consciousness and intensifies popular emotion. Every man feels himself a part, sensitive and sympathetic, of this vast organism, a partner in

its life or death. The sentiment of patriotism is etherealized and ennobled by it, is kindled by the more or less conscious presence of an ideal element; and the instinctive love of a few familiar hills and fields widens, till Country is no longer an abstraction, but a living presence, felt in the heart and operative in the conscience, like that of an absent mother. It is no trifling matter that thirty millions of men should be thinking the same thought and feeling the same pang at a single moment of time, and that these vast parallels of latitude should become a neighborhood more intimate than many a country village. The dream of Human Brotherhood seems to be coming true at last. The peasant who dipped his net in the Danube, or trapped the beaver on its banks, perhaps never heard of Cæsar or of Cæsar's murder; but the shot that shattered the forecasting brain, and curdled the warm, sweet heart of the most American of Americans, echoed along the wires through the length and breadth of a continent, swelling all eyes at once with tears of indignant sorrow. Here was a tragedy fulfilling the demands of Aristotle, and purifying with an instantaneous throb of pity and terror a theatre of such proportions as the world never saw. We doubt if history ever recorded an event as touching and awful as this sympathy so wholly emancipated from the toils of space and time that it might seem as if earth were really sentient, as some have dreamed, or the great god Pan alive again to make the hearts of nations stand still with his shout. What is Beethoven's "Funeral March for the Death of a Hero," to the symphony of love, pity, and wrathful resolve which the telegraph of that April morning played on the pulses of a nation?

It has been said that our system of town-meetings made our Revolution possible, by educating the people in self-government. But this was at most of partial efficacy, while the newspaper and telegraph gather the whole nation into a vast town-meeting, where every one hears the affairs of the country discussed, and where the better judgment is pretty sure to make itself valid at last. No memorable thing is said or done, no invention or discovery is made, that some mention of it does not sooner or later reach the ears of a majority of Americans. It is this constant mental and moral stimulus which gives them

the alertness and vivacity, the wide-awakeness of temperament, characteristic of dwellers in great cities, and which has been remarked on by English tourists as if it were a kind of physiological transformation. They seem to think we have lost something of that solidity of character which (with all other good qualities) they consider the peculiar inheritance of the British race, though inherited in an elder brother's proportion by the favored dwellers in the British Isles. We doubt if any substantial excellence is lost by this suppling of the intellectual faculties, and bringing the nervous system nearer the surface by the absorption of superfluous fat. What is lost in bulk may be gained in spring. It is true that the clown, with his parochial horizon, his diet inconveniently thin, and his head conveniently thick, whose notion of greatness is a prize pig, and whose patriotism rises or falls with the strength of his beer, is a creature as little likely to be met with here as the dodo, his only rival in the qualities that make up a good citizen ; but this is no result of climatic influences. Such creatures are the contemporaries of an earlier period of civilization than ours. Nor is it so clear that solidity is always a virtue, and lightness a vice in character, any more than in bread, or that the leaven of our institutions works anything else than a wholesome ferment and aeration. The experience of the last four years is enough to prove that sensibility may consist with tenacity of purpose, and that enthusiasm may become a permanent motive where the conviction of the worth of its object is profound and logical. There are things in this universe deeper and higher, more solid even, than the English Constitution. If that is the perfection of human wisdom and a sufficing object of faith and worship for our cousins over the water, on the other hand God's dealing with this chosen people is preparing them to conceive of a perfection of divine wisdom, a constitution in the framing of which man's wit had no share, and which shall yet be supreme, as it is continually more or less plainly influential in the government of the world. We may need even sterner teaching than any we have yet had, but we have faith that the lesson will be learned at last.

If the assertion which we alluded to at the outset were true, if we, more than others, are apt to forget the past in the present, the

work of Mr. Moore, the title of which we have put at the head of our article, would do much in helping us to recover what we have lost. Had its execution been as complete as its plan was excellent, it would have left nothing to be desired. Its want of order may be charged upon the necessity of monthly publication; but there are other defects which this will hardly excuse. The editor seems to have become gradually helpless before the mass of material that heaped itself about him, and to have shovelled from sheer despair of selection. In the documentary part he is sufficiently, sometimes even depressingly full, and he has preserved a great deal of fugitive poetry from both sides, much of it spirited, and some of it vigorously original;* but he has frequently neglected to give his authorities. His extracts from the newspapers of the day, especially from Southern and foreign ones, are provokingly few, and his department of "incidents and rumors," the true mirror of the time, inadequate both in quantity and quality. In spite of these defects, however, there is enough to recall vividly the features of the time at any marked period during the war, to renew the phases of feeling, to trace the slowly gathering current of opinion, and to see a definite purpose gradually orbing itself out of the chaos of plans and motives, hopes, fears, enthusiasms, and despondencies. We do not propose to review the book, — we might, indeed, almost as well undertake to review the works of Father Time himself, — but, relying chiefly on its help in piecing out our materials, shall try to freshen the memory of certain facts and experiences worth bearing in mind either for example or warning.

It is of importance, especially considering the part which what are called the "leading minds" of the South are expected to play in reconstruction, to keep clearly before our minds the motives and the manner of the Rebellion. Perhaps we should say inducements rather than motives, for of these there was but a single one put forward by the seceding States, namely, the obtaining security, permanence, and extension for the system of slavery. We do not use the qualifying epithet African, because the franker propagandists of Southern principles af-

* See especially "The Old Sergeant," a remarkable poem by Forceythe Willson, in the sixth volume.

firmed the divine institution of slavery pure and simple, without regard to color or the curse of Canaan. This being the single motive of the Rebellion, what was its real object? Primarily, to possess itself of the government by a sudden *coup d'état*; or that failing, then, secondarily, by a peaceful secession, which should paralyze the commerce and manufactures of the Free States, to bring them to terms of submission. Whatever may have been the opinion of some of the more far-sighted, it is clear that a vast majority of the Southern people, including their public men, believed that their revolution would be peaceful. Their inducements to moving precisely when they did were several. At home the treasury was empty; faithless ministers had supplied the Southern arsenals with arms, and so disposed the army and navy as to render them useless for any sudden need; but above all, they could reckon on several months of an administration which, if not friendly, was so feeble as to be more dangerous to the country than to its betrayers, and there was a great party at the North hitherto their subservient allies, and now sharing with them in the bitterness of a common political defeat.* Abroad there was peace, with the prospect of its continuance; the two great maritime powers were also the great consumers of cotton, were both deadly enemies, like themselves, to the democratic principle, and, if not actively interfering, would at least throw all the moral weight of their sympathy and encouragement on the Southern side. They were not altogether mistaken in their reckoning. The imbecility of Mr. Buchanan bedded the ship of state in an ooze of helpless inaction, where none of her guns could be brought to bear, and whence nothing but the tide of indignation which followed the attack on Sumter could have set her afloat again, while prominent men and journals of the Democratic party hastened to assure the Rebels, not only of approval, but of active physical assistance. England, with indecent eagerness, proclaimed a neutrality which secured belligerent rights to a conspiracy that was never to become a nation, and thus enabled members of Parliament to fit out privateers to prey with impunity on the commerce of a friendly power. The wily

* Mr. A. H. Stephens, Vice-President of the late Confederacy, attributed the Secession movement to disappointed ambition.

Napoleon followed, after an interval long enough to throw all responsibility for the measure, and to direct all the natural irritation it excited in this country, upon his neighbor over the way. England is now endeavoring to evade the consequences of her hasty proclamation and her jaunty indifference to the enforcement of it upon her own subjects. The principle of international law involved is a most important one; but it was not so much the act itself, or the pecuniary damage resulting from it, as the *animus* that so plainly prompted it, which Americans find it hard to forgive.

It would be unwise in us to forget that independence was a merely secondary and incidental consideration with the Southern conspirators at the beginning of the Rebellion, however they may have thought it wise to put it in the front, both for the sake of their foreign abettors who were squeamish about seeming, though quite indifferent about being, false to their own professions and the higher interests of their country, and also for the sake of its traditionary influence among the Southern people. Some, it is true, were bold enough or logical enough to advocate barbarism as a good in itself; and in estimating the influences which have rendered some minds, if not friendly to the Rebellion, at least indifferent to the success of the Union, we should not forget that reaction against the softening and humanizing effect of modern civilization, led by such men as Carlyle, and joined in by a multitude whose intellectual and moral fibre is too much unstrung to be excited by anything less pungent than paradox. Protestants against the religion which sacrifices to the polished idol of Decorum and translates Jehovah by *Comme-il-faut*, they find even the divine manhood of Christ too tame for them, and transfer their allegiance to the shaggy Thor with his mallet of brute force. This is hardly to be wondered at when we hear England called prosperous for the strange reason that she no longer dares to act from a noble impulse, and when, at whatever page of her recent history one opens, he finds her statesmanship to consist of one Noble Lord or Honorable Member asking a question, and another Noble Lord or Honorable Member endeavoring to dodge it, amid cries of *Hear! Hear!* enthusiastic in proportion to the fruitlessness of listening. After all, we are inclined to

think there is more real prosperity, more that posterity will find to have a deep meaning and reality, in a democracy spending itself for a principle, and, in spite of the remonstrances, protests, and sneers of a world busy in the eternal seesaw of the balance of Europe, persisting in a belief that life and property are mere counters of no value except as representatives of a higher idea. May it be long ere government becomes in the New World, as in the Old, an armed police and fire-department to protect property as it grows more worthless by being selfishly clutched in fewer hands, and keep God's fire of manhood from reaching that gunpowder of the dangerous classes which underlies all institutions based on the wisdom of our ancestors.

As we look back to the beginnings of the Rebellion we are struck with the thoughtlessness with which both parties entered upon a war, of whose vast proportions and results neither was even dimly conscious. But a manifest difference is to be remarked. In the South this thoughtlessness was the result of an ignorant self-confidence, in the North of inexperience and good humor. It was long before either side could believe that the other was in earnest, the one in attacking a government which they knew only by their lion's share in its offices and influence, the other in resisting the unprovoked assault of a race born in the saddle, incapable of subjugation, and unable to die comfortably except in the last ditch of jubilant oratory. When at last each was convinced of the other's sincerity, the moods of both might have been predicted by any observer of human nature. The side which felt that it was not only in the wrong, but that it had made a blunder, lost all control of its temper, all regard for truth and honor. It betook itself forthwith to lies, bluster, and cowardly abuse of its antagonist. But beneath every other expression of Southern sentiment, and seeming to be the base of it, was a ferocity not to be accounted for by thwarted calculations or by any resentment at injuries received, but only by the influence of slavery on the character and manners. "Scratch a Russian," said Napoleon, "and you come to the Tartar beneath." Scratch a slaveholder, and beneath the varnish of conventionalism you come upon something akin to the man-hunter of Dahomey. Nay, the selfishness engendered by any system which rests on the right of the strongest is more

irritable and resentful in the civilized than the savage man, as it is enhanced by a consciousness of guilt. In the first flush of over-confidence, when the Rebels reckoned on taking Washington, the air was to be darkened with the gibbeted carcasses of dogs and caitiffs. Pollard, in the first volume of his *Southern History of the War*, prints without comment the letter of a ruffian who helped butcher our wounded in Sudly Church after the first battle of Manassas, in which he says that he had resolved to give no quarter. In Missouri the Rebels took scalps as trophies, and that they made personal ornaments of the bones of our unburied dead, and that women wore them, though seeming incredible, has been proved beyond question. Later in the war, they literally starved our prisoners in a country where Sherman's army of a hundred thousand men found supplies so abundant that they could dispense with their provision train. Yet these were the "gentry" of the country, in whose struggle to escape from the contamination of mob-government the better classes of England so keenly sympathized. Our experience is thrown away unless it teach us that every form of conventionalized injustice is instinctively in league with every other, the world over, and that all institutions safe only in law, but forever in danger from reason and conscience, beget first selfishness, next fear, and then cruelty, by an incurable degeneration. Having been thus taught that a rebellion against justice and mercy has certain natural confederates, we must be blind indeed not to see whose alliance at the South is to give meaning and permanence to our victory over it.

In the North, on the other hand, nothing is more striking than the persistence in good nature, the tenacity with which the theories of the erring brother and the prodigal son were clung to, despite all evidence of facts to the contrary. There was a kind of boyishness in the rumors which the newspapers circulated (not seldom with intent to dispirit), and the people believed on the authority of reliable gentlemen from Richmond, or Union refugees whose information could be trusted. At one time the Rebels had mined eleven acres in the neighborhood of Bull Run; at another, there were regiments of giants on their way from Texas, who, first paralyzing our batteries by a yell, would rush unscathed upon the guns and rip up the

unresisting artillerymen with bowie-knives three feet long, made for that precise service, and the only weapon to which these Berserkers would condescend ; again, for the fiftieth time, France and England had definitely agreed upon a forcible intervention ; finally, in order to sap the growing confidence of the people in President Lincoln, one of his family was accused of communicating our plans to the Rebels, and this at a time when the favorite charge against his administration was the having no plan at all. The public mind, as the public folly is generally called, was kept in a fidget by these marvels and others like them. But the point to which we would especially call attention is this, that, while the war slowly educated the North, it has had comparatively little effect in shaking the old nonsense out of the South. Nothing is more striking, as we trace Northern opinion through those four years that seemed so long and seem so short, than to see how the minds of men were sobered, braced, and matured as the greatness of the principles at stake became more and more manifest, how their purpose, instead of relaxing, was strained tighter by disappointment, and by the growing sense of a guidance wiser than their own. Nor should we forget how slow the great body of the people were in being persuaded of the expediency of directly attacking slavery, and after that of enlisting colored troops ; of the fact, in short, that it must always be legal to preserve the source of the law's authority, and constitutional to save the country. The prudence of those measures is now acknowledged by all, and justified by the result ; but we must not be blind to the deeper moral, that justice is always and only politic, that it needs no precedent, and that we were prosperous in proportion as we were willing to be true to our nobler judgment. In one respect only the popular understanding seems always to have been, and still to remain, confused. Our notion of treason is a purely traditional one, derived from countries where the question at issue has not been the life of the nation, but the conflicting titles of this or that family to govern it. Many people appear to consider civil war as merely a more earnest kind of political contest, which leaves the relative position of the parties as they would be after a Presidential election. But no treason was ever so wicked as

that of Davis and his fellow-conspirators, for it had no apology of injury or even of disputed right, and it was aimed against the fairest hope and promise of the world. They did not attempt to put one king in place of another, but to dethrone human nature and discrown the very manhood of the race. And in what respects does a civil war differ from any other in the discretion which it leaves to the victor of exacting indemnity for the past and security for the future? A contest begun for such ends and maintained by such expedients as this has been, is not to be concluded by merely crying *quits* and shaking hands. The slave-holding States chose to make themselves a foreign people to us, and they must take the consequences. We surely cannot be expected to take them back as if nothing had happened, as if victory rendered us helpless to promote good or prevent evil, and took from us all title to insist on the admission of the very principle for which we have sacrificed so much. The war has established the unity of the government, but no peace will be anything more than a pretence unless it rests upon the unity of the nation, and that can only be secured by making everywhere supreme the national idea that freedom is a right inherent in man himself, and not a creature of the law, to be granted to one class of men or withheld from it at the option of another.

What have we conquered? The Southern States? The Southern people? A cessation of present war? Surely not these or any one of these merely. The fruit of our victory, as it was always the object of our warfare, is the everlasting validity of the theory of the Declaration of Independence in these United States, and the obligation before God and man to make it the rule of our practice. It was in that only that we were stronger than our enemies, stronger than the public opinion of the world; and it is from that alone that we derive our right of the strongest, for it is wisdom, justice, and the manifest will of Him who made of one blood all the nations of the earth. It were a childish view of the matter to think this a mere trial of strength or struggle for supremacy between the North and South. The war sprang from the inherent antipathy between two forms of political organization radically hostile to each other. Is the war over, will it ever be over, if we allow the

incompatibility to remain, childishly satisfied with a mere change of shape? This has been the grapple of two brothers that already struggled with each other even in the womb. One of them has fallen under the other; but let simple, good-natured Esau beware how he slacken his grip till he has got back his inheritance, for Jacob is cunninger with the tongue than he.

We have said that the war has given the North a higher conception of its manhood and its duties, and of the vital force of ideas. But do we find any parallel change in the South? We confess we look for it in vain. There is the same arrogance, the same materialistic mode of thought, which reckons the strength and value of a country by the amount of its crops rather than by the depth of political principle which inspires its people, the same boyish conceit on which even defeat wastes its lesson. Here is a clear case for the interference of authority. The people have done their part by settling the fact that we have a government; and it is for the government now to do its duty toward the people, by seeing to it that their blood and treasure shall not have been squandered in a meaningless conflict. We must not let ourselves be misled by the terms North and South, as if those names implied any essential diversity of interest, or the claim to any separate share in the future destiny of the country. Let us concede every right to the several States except that of mischief, and never again be deceived by the fallacy that a moral wrong can be local in its evil influence, or that a principle alien to the instincts of the nation can be consistent either with its prosperity or its peace. We must not be confused into a belief that it is with States that we are dealing in this matter. The very problem is how to reconstitute safely a certain territory or population as States. It is not we that take anything from them. The war has left them nothing that they can fairly call their own politically, but helplessness and confusion. We propose only to admit them for the first time into a real union with us, and to give them an equal share in privileges, our belief in whose value we have proved by our sacrifices in asserting them. There is always a time for doing what is fit to be done; and if it be done wisely, temperately, and firmly, it need appeal for its legality to no higher test than suc-

cess. It is the nation, and not a section, which is victorious, and it is only on principles of purely national advantage that any permanent settlement can be based.

The South will come back to the Union intent on saving whatever fragments it can from the wreck of the evil element in its social structure, which it clings to with that servile constancy which men often show for the vice that is making them its victims. If they must lose slavery, they will make a shift to be comfortable on the best substitute they can find in a system of caste. The question for a wise government in such a case seems to us not to be, Have we the right to interfere? but much rather, Have we the right to let them alone? If we are entitled, as conquerors, and it is only as such that we are so entitled, to stipulate for the abolition of slavery, what is there to prevent our exacting further conditions no less essential to our safety and the prosperity of the South? The national unity we have paid so dearly for will turn out a pinchbeck counterfeit, without that sympathy of interests and ideas, that unity of the people, which can spring only from homogeneousness of institutions. The successive advances toward justice which we made during the war, and which looked so difficult and doubtful before they were made, the proclamation of freedom and the arming of the blacks, seem now to have been measures of the simplest expediency, as the highest always turns out to be the simplest when we have the wit to try it. The heavens were to have come crashing down after both those measures; yet the pillars of the universe not only stood firm on their divinely-laid foundations, but held us up also, and, to the amazement of many, God did not frown on an experiment of righteousness. People are not yet agreed whether these things were constitutional; we believe, indeed, that the weight of legal opinion is against them, but nevertheless events are tolerably unanimous that without them we should have had a fine Constitution left on our hands with no body politic for it to animate.

Laws of the wisest human device are, after all, but the sheath of the sword of Power, which must not be allowed to rust in them till it cannot be drawn swiftly in time of need. President Lincoln had many scruples to overcome ere he could overstep the limits of precedent into the divine air of moral greatness.

Like most men, he was reluctant to be the bearer of that message of God with which his name will be linked in the grateful memory of mankind. If he won an immortality of fame by consenting to ally himself with the eternal justice, and to reinforce his armies by the inspiration of their own nobler instincts, an equal choice of renown is offered to his successor in applying the same loyalty to conscience in the establishment of peace. We could not live together half slave and half free; shall we succeed better in trying a second left-handed marriage between democracy and another form of aristocracy, less gross, but not less uncongenial? They who before misled the country into a policy false and deadly to the very truth which was its life and strength, by the fear of abolitionism, are making ready to misrule it again by the meaner prejudice of color. We can have no permanent peace with the South but by Americanizing it, by compelling it, if need be, to accept the idea, and with it the safety of democracy. At present we seem on the brink of contracting to protect from insurrection States in which a majority of the population, many of them now trained to arms, and all of them conscious of a claim upon us to make their freedom strong enough to protect them, are to be left at the mercy of laws which they have had no share in enacting.

The gravity of this consideration alone should make us pause. The more thought we bestow upon the matter, the more thoroughly are we persuaded that the only way to get rid of the negro is to do him justice. Democracy is safe because it is just, and safe only when it is just to all. Here is no question of white or black, but simply of man. We have hitherto been strong in proportion as we dared be true to the sublime thought of our own Declaration of Independence, which for the first time proposed to embody Christianity in human laws, and announced the discovery that the security of the state is based on the moral instincts and the manhood of its members. In the very midnight of the war, when we were compassed around with despondency and the fear of man, that peerless utterance of human policy rang like a trumpet announcing heavenly succor, and lifted us out of the darkness of our doubts into that courage which comes of the fear of God. Now, if ever, may a statesman depend upon the people sustaining him in doing

what is simply right, for they have found out the infinite worth of freedom and how much they love it, by being called on to defend it. We have seen how our contest has been watched by a breathless world,—how every humane and generous heart, every intellect bold enough to believe that men may be safely trusted with government as well as with any other of their concerns, has wished us God-speed. And we have felt as never before the meaning of those awful words, “Hell beneath is stirred for thee,” as we saw all that was mean and timid and selfish and wicked, by a horrible impulsion of nature, gathering to the help of our enemies. Why should we shrink from embodying our own idea as if it would turn out a Frankenstein? Why should we let the vanquished dictate terms of peace? A choice is offered that may never come again, unless after another war. We should sin against our own light, if we allowed mongrel republics to grow up again at the South, and deliberately organized anarchy, as if it were better than war. Let the law be made equal for all men. If the power does not exist in the Constitution, find it somewhere else, or confess that democracy, strongest of all governments for war, is the weakest of all in the statesmanship that shall save us from it. There is no doubt what the wishes of the Administration are. Let them act up to their own convictions and the emergency of the hour, sure of the support of the people; for it is one of the chief merits of our form of polity, that the public reason, which gives our Constitution all its force, is always a reserve of power to the magistrate, open to the appeal of justice, and ready to ratify the decisions of conscience. There is no need of hurry in readmitting the States that locked themselves out of the old homestead. It is not enough to conquer unless we convert them, and time, the best means of quiet persuasion, is in our own hands. Shall we hasten to cover with the thin ashes of another compromise that smouldering war which we called peace for seventy years, only to have it flame up again when the wind of Southern doctrine has set long enough in the old quarter? It is not the absence of war, but of its causes, that is in our grasp. That is what we fought for, and there must be a right somewhere to enforce what all see to be essential. To quibble away such an opportunity would be as cowardly as unwise.